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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [KPKO](#) [PBTS](#) [ET](#) [ER](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA CLOSE TO U.S. POSITION ON THE FUTURE OF
UNMEE

REF: STATE 58446

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G. Wells for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) MFA First Secretary for International Organizations Sergey Zhdanov told us on June 6 that Russia agreed that UNMEE cannot play an effective role in the region and should either be terminated or its mandate not renewed when it ends on July 31. He explained that before the UNSC took action on this issue, the GOR preferred to wait until Eritrea and Ethiopia made their positions known by responding to the letter the UNSC President recently sent these governments. Russia could support a follow-on presence, even if it was located only on Ethiopian territory.

¶2. (C) Zhdanov said that the GOR understood a "legalistic" reading of the 2000 Algiers Agreement meant that the withdrawal of UNMEE would signify that the terms of the Agreement had been fulfilled, suggesting that the Eritrean-Ethiopian border demarcation determined since the end of hostilities would be considered final. This fact could help explain the behavior of Eritrea, which may want UNMEE withdrawn as a means to gain international acceptance of the current border.
RUSSELL